

Your Questions

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Works well with

- ✓ Other entries in the 'Freedom' section
- ✓ Nick of Time
- ✓ Pinka and Arwin Go Forth, especially Of Macs and Men
- ✓ *Thoughtings*: Are You Free?
- ✓ *The If Machine*: Billy Bash, The Little Old Shop of Curiosities, The Frog and the Scorpion, The Happy Prisoner

Source: *Clockwork or All Wound Up* by Phillip Pullman.

Philosophy: Determinism, free will, Isaac Newton, Gottfried Leibniz, the problem of the first cause ('the prime mover').

Immy's Interesting Invention

Peter Worley

Starting age: 10 years

Immy is concerned that too many people lie to each other, steal from others and generally harm other people when they shouldn't. To combat this worry – a worry that many people share with him – and being also a scientist and inventor, Immy has come up with what he thinks is a solution to the problem. He has invented a tiny device that can be implanted into our heads, and once implanted will stop anyone with the implant from being able to do certain things, no matter what the circumstances. Immy suggests programming the device to stop us from doing the following things because he thinks they are things no one should ever do:

1. Lying
2. Stealing

3. Causing harm to others

That would mean that once the device has been implanted into would be simply *unable* to lie, steal or cause harm to others. If you tongue, your hands – or whatever it is – would simply stop working

Start Question 1a Would you have the implant with Immy's suggestion so that you would never, under any circumstances, lie, steal or cause harm to others?

Start Question 1b If not Immy's, have you any of your own suggestions to programme into the device?

Questions to take you further

- ♦ Just like Immy, some people think that there are certain things you should never do under any circumstances, such as killing. Are they right about this?
- ♦ Is it right that our freedom be limited so that we behave better?
- ♦ Is it right that we have freedom to do as we please even if others are affected?
- ♦ What is more important: freedom or the greater good?
- ♦ Would it be better if we had no power of choice but always did the right thing?
- ♦ If we had Immy's implant, would we always do the right thing?

Your Questions

- ♦ Why would it be important to keep the capacity for free will?
- ♦ If someone was born that was incapable of doing a certain thing, are they human? Are they a person? Would you consider them a person?

Works well with

- ✓ Other entries in the 'Freedom' section (particularly Prisoner)
- ✓ A Bad Picture
- ✓ The Wicked Which
- ✓ Nick of Time
- ✓ The Good Daleks
- ✓ Arete and Deon
- ✓ Louis' Goodness Detector
- ✓ *The If Machine*: The Ring of Gyges, The Ceebie Stories

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3. Causing harm to others

That would mean that once the device has been implanted into your head you would be simply *unable* to lie, steal or cause harm to others. If you tried, then your tongue, your hands – or whatever it is – would simply stop working.

Start Question 1a Would you have the implant with Immy's suggestions programmed in so that you would never, under any circumstances, lie, steal or cause harm?

Start Question 1b If not Immy's, have you any of your own suggestions that you would programme into the device?

Questions to take you further

- ♦ Just like Immy, some people think that there are certain things you should never do, under any circumstances, such as killing. Are they right about this?
- ♦ Is it right that our freedom be limited so that we behave better?
- ♦ Is it right that we have freedom to do as we please even if others are harmed as a result?
- ♦ What is more important: freedom or the greater good?
- ♦ Would it be better if we had no power of choice but always did the right thing?
- ♦ If we had Immy's implant, would we always do the right thing?

Your Questions

- ♦ Why would it be important to keep the capacity for evil?
- ♦ If someone was born that was incapable of doing anything wrong, are they human? Are they a person? Would you accept them?

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- ✓ Other entries in the 'Freedom' section (particularly Prisoner)
- ✓ A Bad Picture
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